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## WALLS AND CEILINGS FROM WELL-KNOWN AUTHORS.

ROBERT W. EDIS.

—Anything that holds dust is essentially out of place on the walls of a room, and no matter how picturesque the general effect of good tapestry, it would be utterly out of place in the permanent decoration of the wall surfaces of our houses; but I see no reason why good pieces of old tapestry should not be hung on the walls of the halls and staircases as pictures or any other objects of art, so long as they are movable and easily shifted for cleaning purposes.

—The present French system of paneling the rooms with elaborate framework of intricate moldings and carvings, and filling in the panels with silk or paper, is certainly not adapted for town rooms; the carvings and moldings hold dirt, require constantly cleaning, and are extravagant and costly—nor do I think the effect in any way satisfactory, except in very large reception rooms.

—Embossed leather was largely used in the Elizabethan age for wall hangings, but this is exceedingly costly and difficult to obtain; where used, it may be formed into a high dado, with plain deal molding area, or divided into small dado panels, where the ornaments or pattern will admit of it. The papers stamped after the manner of leather, by Messrs. Jeffrey, are exceedingly good in design and fairly inexpensive.

—Good tiles can be used in the panels in the walls of halls, with painted figures of other decorative subjects; but pray do not encourage the use of rough, unevenly burnt tiles, by which the subject painting is generally utterly ruined or seriously damaged. To suppose that this roughness and irregularity give an air of age is simply ridiculous; and, if it did, it would be setting forth a lie, and be as bad in taste as it is in appearance.

—One of the first principles to be attended to in adorning the walls of an apartment is that nothing should disturb their flatness, and that all direct representations of natural objects should be avoided; first, because it places these objects in unseemly positions; secondly, because it is customary in almost every apartment to suspend on the walls pictures, engravings, or other ornamental works, and that, therefore, the paper should serve as a background, and nothing on it should be offensive or advancing to the eyes.

—It is well to remember a few general rules in decoration of ceilings and cornices on which to rely when choosing colors or tints. For instance, in using what are called primary colors on molded surfaces, it is well to understand that yellow increases, while blue diminishes in strength, the former should, therefore, be used on convex and the latter on concave moldings.

—If the cornice presents any broad, flat surfaces, a simple conventional flower or geometrical pattern can often be used to great advantage, care being taken not to make it too prominent; the great aim being to keep the general work subservient, and in no way to form a dark molding frame for a mass of light ceiling.

MRS. M. E. HAWES.

—The color of the walls is so important an item in the general good or bad impression of a room, that no beauty of minor objects can atone for a bad background, but a good wall color may redeem the minor objects.

—The possessors of fine embroideries and shawls, like Mr. Alfred Morrison, may emulate him by framing them like pictures on the walls. In this case, a plain wall beneath, of a color which sets them off, is preferable to an elaborate pattern which gets confused with them.

—For pictures or other articles of *vertu*, a plain, warm color, or one where the pattern is sufficiently indistinct, is necessary.

—White walls I have so long denounced, that I need not here add venom to their death-blow—society is rapidly giving them up.

—A dark wall adds size because the eye cannot exactly measure the distance at which the wall stands; whereas, in the case of a white wall, the eye calculates it to an inch.

—Velvet is one of the most beautiful coverings for a room, it is so fine a background in any soft color, and with care it may be kept very clean. It must not be brushed, but wiped with a soft, damp cloth, which brings off the dust in little ribs. Dark amber, blue or crimson is extremely rich, and, when carefully adapted, hardly dearer than the costly papers which rich people buy.

—All hangings will collect damp if they are allowed; but tapestry well cared for, cleaned occasionally with bread or benzole, and kept aired, is not as musty as dirty paper.

—Panels down the whole wall, or small panels let into frames, of embroidery or velvet, in either silk or wool, would be a really beautiful ornament.

—Of papers, those which emulate tapestry in a certain harmonious tone of broken color are the best.

—Red of a bright, soft tone is an admirable background, a tone much lighter than maroon, not unlike a very deep salmon color. It is made of Venetian red mixed with white.

—A plain red ceiling sometimes has the happiest effect.

—Ceilings should always be colored, for a darkish ceiling throws no cold reflections down, and materially heightens the room.

The fashion of treating the ceiling as an open roof, and painting it with clouds inhabited by the heathen divinities, either foreshortened in mid-air or treated in the flat, is one which I feel is false in taste; but we have all seen ceilings so splendidly painted that one forgets to criticise. Raphael,

Michel Angelo and their successors decorated ceilings of this kind which are still visible in Rome.

—People seldom notice ceilings now, they are so used to find nothing to see; yet the expanse of surface should not be neglected by the decorator.

—A ceiling must be adapted to the room it crowns, and to the height at which it stands.

—A plain ultramarine ceiling dotted with gold stars is sometimes very agreeable; but the stars must be very small, and smaller toward the centre than toward the sides. Of course, they must be scattered at irregular intervals. A blue ceiling, painted with a conventional cloud border in a much paler blue, is pretty also.

—The frieze should always connect the walls and ceiling by rounding off the angle, and should contain the main colors of both, either pure or in combination.

—A gold ceiling contrasts beautifully with almost any colored wall, and does not bring down the roof.

—The Italians have a knack of so coloring flat ceilings as to look like domes—a very ingenious effect, requiring the nicest calculation of distances. There is one in the museum at Milan which is painted in browns and grays, which, whatever one's opinion of the taste, must be confessed successful.

—We might make something better than we ever do of our ceilings. Paint is not too expensive to obtain, if it gives pleasure for five, ten or twenty years to the owners.

ELLA RODMAN CHURCH.

—One of the handsomest wall coverings for a dining-room, where it is at all suitable, is a dado of rich maroon with gilt figures and a gilt and maroon molding in lines; above this a very pale tint of olive-green, with the cornice of maroon and gold.

—It is indispensably necessary to artistic, or even agreeable effect, that walls should have color or tint of some kind. Nothing can be done with dead white walls. They cannot be so covered with pictures that the interspaces will not stand out in harsh and ghastly contrasts; and all pictures—oil paintings, water-colors or engravings—look exceedingly ill against a background of dead white.

MRS. T. W. DEWING.

—A dead white wall is always painful, and makes some people, who are sensitive to color, extremely nervous, but white tinted with green and ornamented with green, or gold or white with yellow may be exquisite. A pale terra-cotta color for the walls, with a floor stained a dark red, ebonyized doors, or doors of pine stained a dark red, like mahogany, will make a fine setting for furniture upholstered in dark red plush, leather or satin.

—In these days of artistic embroideries, tapestries may find a substitute in modern embroidery. An embroidered frieze, an embroidered arras below, and the dado of wooden or painted panels, could be made exquisite and suitable for a narrow or large hall.

—Tapestry is really more decoration on a wall than anything else, because it does not depend upon light, the surface is always good, and there are no portions of the design lost by the glaze of light that obscures an oil painting seen in an unbecoming light.

—There is a great deal to be said against having a pattern on a bedroom wall. It easily becomes wearisome.

M. E. JAMES.

—The most usual method of decorating walls is to paper them, to paint them in oils, or to wash them with tempera.

—The walls should be of a warmer and stronger hue than the ceiling, and the dado should be darker than the walls.

—In the decoration of the floor, individual taste and comfort should be consulted; for my own part, I prefer a stained floor, which, when well rubbed up, gives the richest and warmest brown color imaginable, harmonizing with everything and setting off the Indian and Persian rugs scattered over it.

—When the room is low the plain paper may be taken down to the skirting and a dado painted on it either in distemper or in body colors, i. e., water-colors mixed with Chinese white. Shades of the same color as the wall paper are preferable for the dado if the wall color forms the groundwork.

—Of course there is no Persian and Median law that the ceiling must be white; when it is, there should always be a little blue or black mixed with it; but it may also be painted in distemper or oil, either in plain tints or with any imaginable devices or pictures.

—It always seems to me that a bedroom should be decorated with some reference to a possible illness. "How should I like that if I had to stare at it for a fortnight?" This question is a very sure test; the papers with patterns that form spots of color at regular intervals will be at once discarded.

—If it be desirable to paint the ceiling at all, I would advise a very pale tint be chosen, and geometrical patterns being stencilled on it in paint just a shade darker than the first tint, the pattern forming either a deep border round the edge or going over the whole surface.

MAURICE B. ADAMS, A.R.I.B.A.

—The advantage of a frieze, besides increasing the interests of the room, is that the molding dividing it from the wall space forms an admirable rail from which to suspend the pictures.

—Good leather makes an excellent dado for dining-rooms.

—The frieze should be lighter than the general scheme of color in room, leading, as it were, on to cornice and ceiling.

—The wall-space over a high dado may be made very rich by the use of painted tapestry decoration, which has the advantage of being easily taken down in case of removal or when the rooms are not in use.

—A good color for the paint-work of a hall of moderate dimensions is a nice brick or Indian red, not too purple in tone.

—The upper part of the wall should be papered with a quiet decorative paper, and the ceiling may be papered with a light buff small foliated paper, or may be washed with distemper of same tint.

**Bismarck's Room.**—To a recent visitor at the Varzinian Tusculum of the Iron Chancellor we owe the following brief sketch: "After crossing the threshold I found myself in a small plain place—the reception room—in the centre of which stands a simple little polished table with four legs. This is a relic of historical significance. A brass plate let into the square top bears the following inscription: 'At this table the preliminaries of the peace between Germany and France were signed, February 26th, 1871, at Versailles, No. 14 Rue de Provence.' In the centre of this table is a round piece of green cloth, and on it are visible a number of spots caused by the drippings from the candles used on the momentous occasion of the negotiations between the Chancellor and Jules Favre. The table was the property of the lady in whose house the Chancellor was quartered, and of whom he bought it. In the same room stands a gigantic wardrobe, richly sculptured, and a second wardrobe that, according to Castellan Hackmack's explanation, was made from the wood of a linden tree, in the shade of which Prince Bismarck, when a merry student at Göttingen, had frequently reposed. The adjoining room is the Prince's study. A book-case contains a small library for immediate use and for reference, among its books being a French account of the peace negotiations. The writing-desk occupies the centre of the room. A polished fire-screen, highly ornamented and of Asiatic origin, is a present from the Japanese Embassy in Berlin. On the mantel stands a bronze statuette, about three feet high, representing the Grand Elector—a present from the Emperor; a slip of paper attached to the Marshal's *bâton* in the Elector's outstretched hand, bears the Imperial autograph: 'To Prince Bismarck—Christmas, 1880.—W.' On the wall, behind the statuette, hangs in a richly-gilt frame a painting representing the attack of the Dragoons of the Guard on French Infantry at Mars-la-Tour (by Hüntten), the Chancellor's two sons, Herbert and William, being in the midst of the fight."

**Pianos.**—The question "What becomes of the played-out pianos?" is no longer among the unanswerable ones. A certain Cesare Donadoni, of Berlin, announces that he wants to purchase "one hundred old pianos." These he transforms into instruments of "torture" on the "crank" system, and exports them to Russia.

**Crackle-Glass.**—To produce "crackle" surface glass, a French inventor, M. Bay, covers the surface of a sheet of glass with a paste made of some coarse-grained flux, or easily fused glass, and placed on a table in a muffle, and subjected to a high temperature. When the coating is fused the sheet is withdrawn and rapidly cooled, and the superficial coating separates itself and leaves the irregular surface. By protecting some parts of the glass from contact with the flux, designs and lettering may be left in smooth glass.—*Illustrated Carpenter and Builder.*

**Fire Dogs,** in a new style of brass, represent two charming women of the sixteenth century, their coquettish heads emerging from wide ruffs, every fold and jewel of which are beautifully molded. The pair stands nearly three feet from the ground, supported by a guard and fender of heavy brass-work, and creates a very imposing effect under a high chimney mantel.

**Artistic Chimneys.**—The fires having been lit at last in the new Law Courts to warm up the premises, prior to the tenants taking possession, the curious fact was revealed on Thursday that the two elegant little minaret-like towers, which give an item of grace to the grand entrance, have been utilized as chimneys. Smoke was pouring out of them, and we could not help feeling proud of the fact that after all we are a very practical people.—*London Court Journal.*

**A Wall Ornament,** newly patented, is a celluloid sickle, having a sheaf of grasses or wheat tied to it with a ribbon.

**Pillow Shams** of colored silk edged with lace, or cream-colored crash embroidered with outline figures from classical or prominent authorities, are now superseding the plain white ones that have bothered all housekeepers for the past few hundred years.

**Oddly-shaped tables** are much in vogue. Many of them are rounded in front and straight at the back, supported on twisted spiral columns or by a half-recumbent figure forming a pedestal. Others in white enamel and gold have deeply-carved feet, representing claws.

**A Library Curtain** of quaint design has an owl with wise eyes seated upon a pile of books, while for a bordering, a Grecian lamp alternates with Greek characters signifying "I write." It is intended to be worked in outline stitch in silk or crewels. This, if carried out upon some plain material, would look well as a hanging in front of book-shelves.

**Bamboo Furniture,** upholstered with loose cushions and covers of soft cretonne in neutral tints, is employed for boudoirs and ladies' sitting-rooms, the hangings for doors matching exactly, and the carpets preserving the tone, which is, however, heightened by rich rugs, Moeren table covers, pieces of rich-colored glass and antique china, and, above all, by the open fire and brasses.

**Lamp and Globe decoration** is fashionable. Colored designs of wreaths of flowers are especially suitable for the latter, and they are as readily painted upon glass as upon china, but it is less easy to have them burnt in. The colors, however, will last quite a long time if simply laid on and left to dry. When they fade there is no difficulty in replacing them.